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Categoriale grammatica en algebraïsche semantiek. Een onderzoek naar negatie en polariteit in het Nederlands

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SUMMARY

This book is concerned with the vexing question of polarity. In particular, it is argued that the various restrictions on the occurrence of both positive and negative polarity items can all be described in terms of a semantically defined hierarchy of negative expressions.

In order to pave the way, I begin by examining several problems in the theory of coordination, all of which appear to show that the classical conception of constituent structure is wrong or at the very least one-sided. Next, in chapter 2, I discuss a class of categorial grammars, usually called free categorial grammars, which differ from context-free phrase structure grammars in that they assign alternative syntactic (and semantic) analyses to one and the same sentence. Then, in chapter 3, I examine various aspects of the theory of Boolean algebras, after which I embark upon a semantic enquiry of the class of expressions often referred to as noun phrases. It is shown that these expressions, regarded as second-order sets, fall into several classes, according to the nature of their values. Outstanding among them is the class of monotone decreasing noun phrases, which appears to embody a weak form of negation, called minimal negation. In particular, it is argued that negative polarity items necessarily require the presence of a monotone decreasing expression. Positive polarity items, on the other hand, seem to be incompatible with various members of this class.

Next, in chapter 5, I discuss the class of so-called anti-additive noun phrases, which is a subset of the class of monotone decreasing noun phrases. Expressions of this kind represent a stronger form of negation than their monotone decreasing counterparts, and are therefore referred to as expressions of regular negation. It is shown that the class of ne-

gative polarity items falls into two groups, one rather permissive, the other of a more demanding nature. The members of the first group require the presence of a monotone decreasing expression, the members of the second group, the presence of an anti-additive expression.

Finally, in chapter 6, I discuss yet another class of noun phrases, referred to as antimorphic noun phrases. Expressions of this kind seem to embody a very strong form of negation, called classical negation. In particular, it is argued that the class of positive polarity items also falls into two groups, according to the restrictions they impose on their environments. Some of them are only incompatible with antimorphic expressions, others are incompatible with the larger class of monotone decreasing expressions.

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